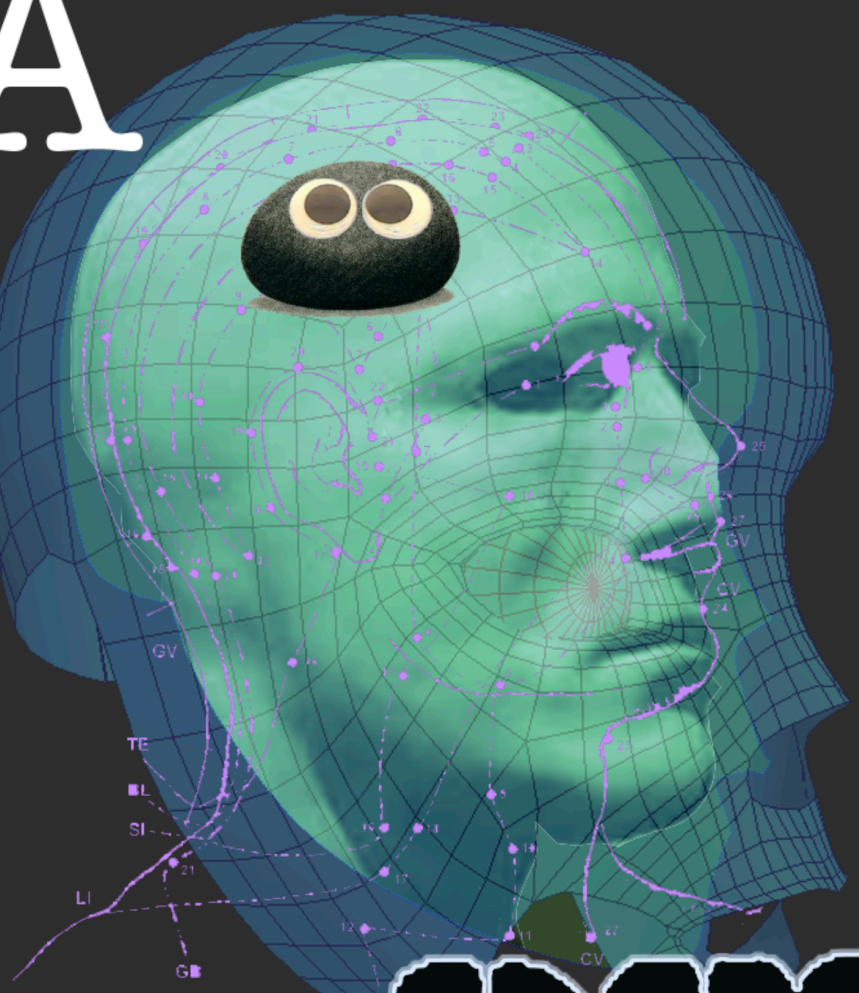
LETTERS TO A



PET ROCK

Letters to a Pet Rock

Chad C. theMagnificent

(introduction) From Malcolm X.

My Love,

I'm not me anymore. I'm sorry I didn't take my medication, but I did keep writing like my therapist suggested. I have been warned that I may change rapidly after the treatment last week, so I am writing my thoughts and dedicating them to you. You can do with them what you wish, but please, make sure you read it first, before anyone else. You're a real fish on a dish, love, and we are all martyrs for our own purposes, I suppose.

Forever,

Malcolm X.

Epistle to the Users

Everybody I know hates me. This is something I accept as a victim of Terminal Asshole Disorder. TAD is a registered trademark of Pfizer, Inc. in case you are the curious sort. So, as I was saying, you miserably bored son of a bitch, the only friends I have are fascinated by my evil genius and study me for their own amusement. So, to live a normal life, everyday my pill schedule is as follows: when I wake, 1 Theragram-M multivitamin, 5ØØ mg of vitamin C, 3 Alfalfa concentrated extract, 1 Claritin-D, 1 Vicoprofen, 1 Dexedrine, 1 Valium; at lunch, one Valium, one Prozac; evening, 1 Valium, 1 Welbutrin, 2 Viagra (should I have my lady friend as accompaniment). Every day I take my pills without fail, I am one healthy and well adjusted piece of shit, let me tell you. Here are 7 reasons I am cooler than you: 1.) I have the guts to tell you precisely why you suck, then tell you why I suck, compare the two, then conclude that I am cooler than you. 2.) I read more in one week than you will read in a whole year. Yes, even more than you, Mr. Guinness Record Breaker for the Most Read in One Year. 3.) I speak Ki-Swahili by choice. 4.) I'm writing while you are sitting on your ass reading. 4.) My name strikes fear into the hearts of parents, yet small children smile upon sight of my visage. 5.) I already own you, and you did not realize it until 3 seconds ago. 6.) I feel comfortable using numbers, not their literary equivalents, in my written text. 7.) I acknowledge and revel in both my ignorance and entropy. I defy you to do the same.

Lonely I entered this world, lonely I remain, and lonely I shall die. I had love, and I destroyed it. I cherished true friendship, and I disemboweled it. Fuck you and you and you. That is correct, I wish to disown the world, disinherit it from the bounty sown from the sweat of my labor. I am awfully put upon for someone who has a twenty year wait for middle-age when all of the social security checks will have been spent on $ 5 tax cuts.

I only really enjoy places I discovered with people I truly cared about. I discovered the rock over the reservoir alone, back when I loved myself. Branford was with Lee. Erin showed me how fun it can be to spend time at Hamonasset, and Pamela was the last to show me how beautiful and

amusing Block Island can be. I fear my quests are over. I will move somewhere and do my boring thing wherever I land. That is all I can look forward to... a different background to the same old routine. A small chile is a walkin de rails, lookin at de flowers an a pickin de grapes. Put dem down in de pockets, and run along home to de table were he put on down dem to lay in de sun. Burn dey do, and he make de raisin for to eat. He dona like de raisin, but e make and eat dem down. E carry dem inna pocket an ride de pony swing and cry.

Yesterday could have been a good day.

Flowers are blooming and all you can think about is that one damn cloud that keeps the sky from being perfect. Why the fuck do you do that? Isn't it enough that the world is in splendor? Why must you pick out that one obnoxious detail and allow it to ruin your day? If only you were more like your cousin John, you could have gotten a teaching job at Xavier and married some fat ugly chick that is lacking in personality instead of being a tortured artist. So is life...

If Jesus loved me he would kill me, along with the neglected pets and burn victim and Ethiopians and American patriots and Red Sox Fans.

I swear I will only waste one. One page is enough. Enough with the self-serving monologue and speak some truth. Truth is the answer to god. God's name is considered a swear. I swear I will waste only one.

The tremors were rising as the hair drifted in small plops to the stained tile. As it welled inside me, I could feel the queasy trickle descending my thigh. I crouched in hidden pain, and my breasts broke free, drying slowly in the sun. My skin shed, and I crawled on the branch in full view of a panel of predators, hungry for my flesh.

Chop, chop... amber lengths fluttered in the breeze. Half my head cools, and I hear the preacher clacking his beak hungrily as he soils my new body with eyes half closed with lust. I start on the other side, and others join the preacher, yearning to deposit seeds if decaying berries from their dirty holes, shitting fresh life from spattered orifices But I will never let them feed upon my secrets, who I was... I refuse to submit as an open book.

Tentative steps toward flight, and I reach for the razor. By now, my thighs thicken with blood, my ass swells enormous, and the preacher cocks his feathered head and hops. Sifting in cruel morning's sunlight, I rip flesh from my forehead and the blood baptizes the sacred forest floor. The cocoon hangs lifeless beneath my navel, awakened and waiting as it coughs up the first of many failures

New fur is sensing the changing breeze which shakes the twigs beneath my many feet, and soon I must learn to fly. I only pray the poison markings of my naked head will be enough to protect the walls of this sanctuary... They hop closer, beaks full of the odor of fresh, clean blood.

I leap.

"S"

After the tenth day had passed, she lost imaginings of perhaps staying persistent and leaving never passed the upward chance of mind. Two bodies, a T, pursed lips, and slip sails all that remain of struggle, sleepless and sweating soul upon steps of stained streets, an entrance to heaven. Ignored, impossibly, she screams. The journey begins.

Upon the wall a baby crawls, wailing with stitch-silent mouth. A blackened hole approaches, mumbling past east 14th, sparing for change. Change passes furtively on the opposite sidewalk as the hole asks for directions from the lazy-eyed bookkeeper. Eyes emitting rainbows, she inhales, watching, waiting, hoping. Two blocks down. Her feet drag heavily over graying grass immobile with sears of souls As She Seeks... Once more block, and the rattling around bodies and under noses slows, screeching but fails to cease. The bottom drops out, and light consumes, digests, and excretes her.

Dora comes to consciousness in a third floor bathtub of a conspicuously nondescript brownstone. Clearing the blurred vision of a rust-spattered surface from her cracked and bleeding vision, she attempts to move. Movement, however, fails her reach as she grasps for it, and she awaits Damian's imminent approach. A small, dark figured and shuffling shape materializes in the doorway. The cat speaks.

"Have twenty dollars on the table before you leave."

He caresses his hindquarters nonchalantly with his tongue, and saunters away into the blackness. Finally I can have peace. He has promised me that after thirty-seven, he will no longer need my services. I have long missed the joyful young anarchist punks, the roving yet resourceful winos, the workers from trains, the visions of pleasant past. This darkness is so plain, so all-consuming, so utterly consumed. I long to forever close my front door to the once-brilliant angel of light.

She can sense the house. The relief. The agonizing ache of release. For a house, life span is indeterminate. For a person, life span is irrelevant. Her purpose has made her significant.

i will not rest. there are other houses, other people to posses. the dreams of the many too infrequently oppress the needs of the few. your every friendly rebel feline, forever yours in protest,

-damian

"What is more trite than a love story with a tragic ending? Perhaps one with a martyr? Gather 'round, children, and Grandpappy Gelatin will tell you the tale of the Arawak and the moon."

"Back in the old days, the proud tribe Arawak thrived along the river of the same name. Steeped in the deep odors of sweaty leather and moist loam, they guarded their secrets carefully and gave reverence to both sun and moon. As any good tribe would, they hunted and foraged the fertile river back for sustenance, and provided some of these spoils as sacrifice to their most important spirits, which included those of the sun and moon. Now, it so happened..."

When Grandpappy Gelatin notices that Little Freddy has taken a break from rolling his eyes, and has resumed playing NES Baseball, he trails off and belts the ungrateful little bastard in the back of his head.

"Listen to me when I'm telling a story, you little shit!" seethes Grandpappy Gelatin as he reaches into his crusty green tweed and pulls out a flask from the Burmese war. As he is sloppily swigging a quick belt of five dollar gin, Little Freddy is yelping, "Ow Grandpappy! What the crap?! I'm playing the Freakin' Yankees for the pennant! And your stories never go anywhere, anyway."

At this, Grandpappy Gelatin fixes Little Freddy with a frigid, distant stare and intones, "This one does. It is about your future, son." Then his eyes go glassy and bloodshot again, and he pulls one more swig of the synthetic Pine-Sol before continuing.

"Ahem. In this tribe, the night of the fourteenth moon was considered sacred, and the nightly sacrifice to the moon spirit would be suspended. This night was known as Nonnetuckwhet, or the Great Light Sleeps. We know this as the new moon, when the stars rule the night as the moon slumbers. Oh yes, and this was the year of the moon spirit, so Nonnetuckwhet was especially sacred. On the very last Nonnetuckwhet of the year, there was a miraculous birth. The medicine man of the largest village on the river had been expecting a daughter, and on this night, at the exact time of the

falling of the sun, this daughter arrived, accompanied by the largest storm of wind and fire the river had ever seen, or ever will see. The medicine man correctly ascertained that this child, his only daughter, was the daughter of the spirits of the sun and moon. So, she was named Lunapulteak, which means All-Mother-of-the-Night-and-Day."

Little Freddy had been drifting between various states of consciousness until he heard about this daughter and thought he had a legitimate complaint.

"Wait, Grandpappy Gelatin, I thought this story was about my future. What does some Indian bitch have to do with me?"

Grandpappy Gelatin wobbled a little while glaring at him, and swallowed his alcoholic mouthful. Then, in a surprisingly swift motion for a man his age, Gelatin whipped off his scarred leather belt and covered Little Freddy's mouth with his yellowed hand.

"Can't learn a lesson, huh?" he growled somewhat slurrily. Little Freddy squeaked, his terrified eyes popping above the wrinkled paw, which, while stinking simultaneously of mothballs, liniment, cigars, and stale cough syrup, muffled his panicked cries.

"Maybe the leather will get through your thick little head where words alone have failed," snarled Grandpappy Gelatin as he lit into Little Freddy again and again, until little rust-colored patches appeared through his pajama top around the navel. His mustache twitched, and he lifted his hand from Little Freddy's now silent mouth. As Freddy's hysterical breathing slowed, Grandpappy Gelatin composed himself as best as he drunkenly could, and spoke.

"There. Quiet now, ain't you? I wager you'll keep that little cock-trap shut when I'm in the middle of a story from now on, won't you?

Silently, slowly, Little Freddy indicated assent, and Gelatin resumed his tale.

"As Lunapulteak grew, each sunrise revealed greater and greater beauty on her face. Unfortunately, this had created a problem that her father had foreseen before her birth... As

daughter of the moon, she inspired madness. Every young man in the village was slowly going mad, mostly with lust, and as a result, the hunting had severely fallen off, and the village had begun to go hungry."

"At this same time, in a neighboring village, there was a young man who was in love with the moon. This young man, much like you, had little respect for his elders, loved bright, flashy doodads, and was generally good for nothing. I wouldn't be surprised if he fucked buffalo."

Little Freddy jerked upright, indignant. "Hey! Grandpappy gelatin, you fucking deluded, wrinkly, smelly..."

Grandpappy Gelatin cracked Little Freddy smartly in the right cheek with a cruel hook, instantly dropping him flat into bed. While fumbling to sit up again, Gelatin drained the last of the flask, then proceeded without regard for the unconscious boy he was drowning in overpowering fumes.

"Back in the large village, Lunapulteak was despondent, for she had by now realized that the madness inspired by her luminescent beauty was destroying her village. One night, after the madness in her village had reached new heights, she began running. Although she did not know where she was headed, Lunapulteak was so upset that she continued to charge along the river until she tripped over a hidden root and sprawled on the bank. As she picked herself up from the dirt, she heard someone nearby, quietly singing. Bold as ever, she approached the source of the melody and found that a young man from the other village stood knee deep in the water, staring up at the full moon. She called out to him, and he turned, startled. He then fell to his knees, allowing the water to run just under his arms, as he faced a beauty that matched that of his beloved moon."

"Trembling, he began, 'So long have I waited for you, pining here every night. Now I can finally profess my eternal love for you, my dearest.'"

"For some reason, she really liked him too, and they made passionate and forbidden love right there on the riverbank, after which Lunapulteak confided to the young man all of the woes she had

brought upon her village. Her young love provided a solution, but grudgingly, for he was reluctant to lose his love so quickly after meeting her."

"The moons passed, and at the next Nonnetuckwhet, Lunapulteak presented herself to the tribe, and declared, 'I know that there have been lean times in our village, and we are all aware that the madness which is at the root of our starvation is my responsibility. So, as the moon must die to bring the dawn, I now must be sacrificed to the moon spirit to bring the salvation of our village.'"

"There was an uproar over this, but the tribe soon came to a reluctant consensus, and the ceremonial spear was readied for her sacrifice. Now, consumed by her love and madness, the young man who had suggested this solution ran to Lunapulteak's village to stop her. When he arrived at the riverbank, he saw Lunapulteak, then the ceremonial spear, and, realizing what was about to happen, rushed to her to save her life."

"Just as was reaching her, the spear was released, and upon finding its mark, pierced both of their swelled hearts in an instant. As their bodies floated down the river, all was calm. The river, dark as the moonless sky, had granted each Arawak his wish. Lunapulteak had saved her village from madness, and the young man was at last one with the moon."

Grandpappy Gelatin shifted drunkenly in his seat as the conclusion of his story conveniently coincided with Little Freddy's mother's slow opening of the bedroom door. Gelatin blinked at the light as she registered the first glimpse of her son, lying prone, bloody and bruised. She flung open the portal and rushed to his side.

"Oh my god, dad!" she exclaimed, cradling his head, "What the hell did you do to my little baby!?!"

Grandpappy Gelatin wavered, appearing somewhat confused, and then let out a weak belch, which surprised him a great deal. Little Freddy slowly regained consciousness as Gelatin regained his typically bellicose posture.

"It's ok, ma," whispered Little Freddy, shooting a very nervous glance at Grandpappy Gelatin, "I just got, uh... sleepy, and... and... uh, fell asleep..." A little too emphatically, he added, "What a great story, Grandpappy!"

"Dad," fretted Freddy's mom, "Are you drunk?! At ten AM on a wednesday!?! If mom was still around..."

Now fully again aware of the situation, Grandpappy Gelatin snapped, "Ah, shut your tubby little stinkhole, Karen... the boy's fine. Learned a thing or two, as well."

Karen sighed, then began a losing battle with a lose strand of hair that refused its place as Gelatin grumbled under his breath, "Self-righteous cunt..."

From Geronimo

This is not a journal, or was it? Tape clicks, rewinds, and sets dream into motion. So I ask you, why still beg for the moon? It has been a lifeless rock for eons... but I don't mean to be insensitive... I know there is really no such thing as a lifeless rock, only stones which tell no tales. You know my loves, losses, fears, fantasies, bus stops, brownies, and lettings of blood too well to dissociate now, as you, endlessly crying to the stars for peace, well realize. This may be my last missive for a while, so don't forget to moisturize those googly peepers, kiddo. I miss your thoughts.

Regards,

Geronimo.

Arachnobureaucracy

As the wan afternoon sunlight struggled into the most horizontal crannies it could, it was quickly outshined by a series of 100-watt bulbs that flicked on one after the other. Click. Click. The spiders scattered, and a low rumble filled the cavernous basement as an industrial wet/dry vac wheezed to life and began tearing with its ravenous snout at the partially abandoned dwellings hanging from the haphazard ceiling. As anyone might expect, after a little while of watching this, the spiders got mightily nervous. All at once, one of them was ripped right off of the beam upon which he had been perched, and they all went into a panic. One of the spiders, perhaps more perceptive than most, noticed that the massive beast of destruction was manned by an equally massive beast of similar intelligence. She shouted:

"Hey there!"

The guy with the vacuum jerked his head back suddenly as if water had suddenly gone up his nose as he was attempting to drink from a fountain. He wore one of those masks you see on surgeons or Shanghai natives, and a pair of ridiculous goggles, the kind you might see on a children's science program on the television back when the television had stations and would show that sort of thing. After a moment of brief confusion, he went back to vacuuming away generations of ancestral spider homes to facilitate his own residence of the grimy hole. She tried again, desperately.

"Hey! Cut it out! We live here!"

This time, it appeared as if he had been stung by a bee that he had not realized was crawling upon him; he jerked about this way and that, then removed his goggles and mask and turned off the equipment.

The spider responded hastily to the sudden silence, "That's much better, thank you."

The vacuum operator, head swimming in imaginings of himself in an eerily accurate, yet particularly banal, charlotte's web alternate universe, brought his head round to directly where he heard the voice, and attempted to continue the conversation.

"I'm, uh... glad you approve?" This last bit appeared to both of them as more of a question than it should have.

"Well. I'm glad that you're glad," snapped the spider, "Now we can all go back to our lives, and there will be no more of that horrible noise and destruction."

"You mean this vacuum cleaner? I can't stop... maybe you could, I don't know... go outside or something?"

"Why should I go outside? Why should any of us go outside? We have lived here for hundreds of years, and there is no reason for you to come in here and destroy us so utterly..."

"Hundreds of years! But this house is only... oh, nevermind... Listen, I am certain that I don't want to do this any more than you want me to," he went on, not quite certain how to reason with a spider, "But there is really nothing I can do; I don't have a choice. My parents have decided that this basement needs to be de-cobwebbed before I can move my crap in and live here, and I have been ordered to do it, and I'm rather obviously out of options. Simple as that."

"But why? Why here?"

"Well, my parents went and spent a lot of money on a house for some reason, and I haven't really got any better place to live, so when they offered me this basement, I accepted."

"That is all fine and well, but why can't we live peaceably here... you don't ~~EAT~~ us, do you?"

"NO, I don't eat spiders!" he exclaimed, exasperated, "~~And~~ I don't really want to vacuum them up, either. I would be just fine living here with a sleeping bag on an island of spiders, but my parents won't let me. If you have an issue with this, take it up with them!"

"OK then. I will." she snipped, "How can I find them?"

As if in answer to the spider's query, a rasping call echoed down the creaky basement staircase.

"I don't hear that vacuum on!!!"

"Listen, that's my mom right there... She looks kinda like me, but, you know, older, Femininer, and, well, you know..."

"More bitter?"

"That's not what I was thinking, but it is a pretty good way to put it... I wish you luck! Let me know quickly so I don't have to keep doing this shit..."

"Right."

With that, she scurried off upstairs.

As twilight was falling upon the sunken façades of the general kitchen area, a roundish lady with rosy cheeks and scattered gray hairs bustled about, searching out any stain or speck she had overlooked in her previous two sorties. Almost directly behind this nervously active woman, a smallish ball of hair chased a bunch of dusty tentacles from under a door, and skittered across the somewhat gleaming linoleum. It seemed to hesitate briefly, then scurried up a counter leg and onto the somewhat gleaming, if scarred, surface.

"Ahem," came a small voice from the sink area. The ball of hair had chosen this moment to make her presence known. The woman hummed a Lovin' Spoonful song with a complete lack of conviction and turned completely in the opposite direction, clutching a double-surfaced sponge. The ball then found her way quickly to the refrigerator door as the door found itself swinging towards an oven door. It nodded briefly to its kitchen companion, then swung shut again.

"I still don't hear that vacuum!" the lady called over her left shoulder. She swiveled her head back towards the refrigerator as the distant hum of an ancient electric engine gasped its way into

the background noise, in between the cicadas' clicking calls and the traffic's drones and catastrophes. At that moment she stopped, rotated her head to the right a few degrees, and studied the ball of hair, surrounded by wispy appendages.

"Excuse me."

At this, the woman adopted what she imagined was a stance of absolutely no nonsense. None. She cocked her hip to one side, pushed on the opposite side with her crooked arm, and stared down at the spider.

"What?"

This flustered the spider somewhat, and she attempted to regain a bit of the haughty contempt she had brought upstairs with her as she spoke.

"You have ordered your son into genocide!" she sputtered. "He is, at this moment, destroying homes and families that have lived down there for generations!"

At this the woman seemed fairly unsympathetic, and possibly murderous. The spider changed her tactic.

"All I am asking for is survival. Please, please, don't make your son destroy our homes!"

She had finally got the response she was looking for; a break in the woman's resolve. She had shifted slightly, and said simply:

"I'm sorry about your homes, but there is really nothing I can do."

"But why? You have so much space, and we need so little..."

"My son needs a place to live... He can't live in a basement that is all full of dust, and mold, and... well..."

"That doesn't sound like a very good reason to kill us and destroy our homes."

"Well, maybe not. But it is still not up to me. In order to have someone live in our basement, even if it is our son, we have to do certain things to improve it, such as clean it out and install a more permanent ceiling... and the little bastard does need a place to stay."

"And just who mandates this slaughter and pillage?"

"Um, the zoning and housing bylaws are mandated by the town that we live in. They tend to be a bit snooty about these little issues..."

The spider held back her instinct to respond to that "little issues" barb, and asked politely how to get to town hall. She was directed properly by the woman, who quickly turned back to her housework without so much as a "good luck" or "farewell."

In an overly fluorescent office surrounded by many much darker, an aging woman sat hunched over a stack of yellowing paper which she shuffled endlessly inches from her equally yellowing eyes, separated only by a half in of convex glass, itself yellowing somewhat. In the corner rustled a crinkly shuffling noise, which was almost completely absorbed by the indifferent hum of the glowing tubes far above. This shuffling noise brushed against the wastepaper basket next to an empty recycling bin, and rested briefly, listening to the papers moving themselves back and forth on the wooden surface above. Suddenly, the noise disappeared, only to soon reemerge on the surface of the desk. The spider tripped over a carelessly discarded paper clip, and let out a small exclamation. The woman, as if removing herself from a waking coma of which she had been overly fond, sluggishly peered around the room as she slowly gathered all of the papers cluttering the surface before her into a pile. As she glanced downward at the newly birthed order upon the desk, she noticed the source of the puzzling noises, and let loose with one of her own. Unfortunately for anyone occupying the air of the immediate two miles, her brand of puzzling noise came in the form of a deafening shriek, followed by the much more subtle sound of a full day's worth of paperwork exploding into a chaotic storm midair, then settling gently to the carpeted floor.

"Um..."

"Excuse... um..."

"please don't..."

The spider attempted to break through the sonic terror reasonably several times, then reasonably gave up and stood tapping the left leg closest to her head against the desk's patient, if yellowing, mahogany while waiting for the clerk to regain her composure. This took some time, and during this time the spider withstood several weak attempts to be shooed away. When this silliness had passed, the spider boldly attempted once again to communicate with this apparently skittish person.

"Well, now that you are calm," she began, "I have a matter of business to attend with the town."

The town clerk merely sat, and allowed her eyes a little forward motion by contracting their lids as far apart from each other as the elasticity of her skin allowed. Her lips thinned and whitened, and then she shakily spoke.

"And what... can we do for you today?"

"It is actually a matter of zoning and housing... you see..."

The spider was abruptly cut off by the clerk.

"We are just about closed here at the town hall, and zoning and housing won't convene until tomorrow. I am sure they would be happy to take your case then."

"Tomorrow? But this matter is quite urgent!"

"Well." she spoke while plucking imaginary dust from her suit jacket, "I am sorry, but there is really nothing I can do."

The spider sighed almost negligibly, then asked, "Would it be OK if I crashed here then? It is quite a walk from my home..."

The town clerk couldn't imagine why a spider would be a burden upon the town hall for one night, or was at least too shocked to refuse.

"Sweet. Do you, by any chance, have any mosquitos bothering about in your town hall, here?"

"Why, I am sure we do!" gasped the clerk, who was by now quite bemused.

"Excellent. See you tomorrow."

As day shattered the collective unconsciousness of a rural town malingering in the depths of New England, cheerful men and women with cheeks reddened by the early fall chill aimlessly chatted their way into a nondescript boardroom, toting confections from a Dunkin' Donuts that they had recently forced to use a brown wooden sign in place of the usual glowing neon and cheerful type which graced the front of every other location. Hidden among the odors of aftershave, fresh croissants, and black coffee, the faint hint of blood and rotting insect carcass stirred in the highest corner of the room and made its bleary way over to the conference table. The general murmur which characterizes the foreplay of official business faded into the background as the First Selectwoman, alderwoman, and elected alternate to the Board of Zoning and Housing shifted slightly and surprised herself by allowed a slight "harrumph" to escape.

"This meeting of the Zoning and Housing board is now called to order," she grandly began, "And let's all thank Valerie for once again providing us her 'homemade' cider donuts..."

At this point, a much smaller "harrumph" echoed through the smallish chamber, and the First Selectwoman, alderwoman, and elected alternate to the Board of Zoning and Housing decided that increasing her pace would be the best method for drawing attention away from the hairy interruption leaking the faint stink of decay over burned coffee.

"Any new business?" she breathlessly continued as the tiny "harrumphs" became both more frequent and audible, "NO? Well then, we shall continue the debate over land tax adjustment tariffs and associated land bill number..."

Apportly fellow who evidently believed in self-reliance all the way down to the tending of his rather unruly steel-gray mane suggested, "Perhaps she has something to say?"

"Order!" Demanded the First Selectwoman, alderwoman, and elected alternate to the Board of Zoning and Housing, "There will be no unelected citizens, spiders inclusive, recognized until given the floor. Board business takes precedence."

The spider finally decided to speak. "If you please, this matter will only take a minute..."

Exasperated, the First Selectwoman, alderwoman, and elected alternate to the Board of Zoning and Housing granted one minute for statement of case, which the spider then succinctly provided. Then something very peculiar happened.

"I think there is something we can do. This is not the first time we have had such complaints of abuse of eminent domain by both private and government interests within the state," answered the First Selectwoman, alderwoman, and elected alternate to the Board of Zoning and Housing.

"Perhaps we can introduce a amendment to the charter that can aid in re-appropriation of seized properties.... of course, we would have to ratify the amendment at a town meeting, but with proper planning, that would be merely a formality. These local residents can be such sheep."

At this, everybody in the room began to chorus with deep, evil-intentioned laughter, and the spider thought better of mentioning that her request was really more of a construction issue. She chuckled nervously, and expressed her deepest gratitude while slowly scuttling for the door.

"Excellent," continued the First Selectwoman, alderwoman, and elected alternate to the Board of Zoning and Housing, "Let us get back to you after the town meeting... let's say... next week. Hopefully we will have good news for you and your family."

Several weeks passed, and the spider checked in with the various board members every day to see how the amendment was progressing. Eventually word of progress came back... Good news! The amendment had passed, and the spider was due legal recompense for the suffering and loss her family

had suffered. She ran back quickly to her home, mid-afternoon sun weakly flashing on paperwork in her grasp. When she arrived, she found that there were many spiderwebs, but none looked familiar. Neither did the various tough looking spiders that now inhabited the crevices below the new ceiling. She found the guy who had so efficiently operated the vacuum nearly a month before, and woke him by tapping gently on his forehead.

"Look! Look! I get to keep my home, and you can stop vacuuming!"

"Uhh..." he groaned, not quite awake. "What? Oh... uh... weeelll... I sorta finished vacuuming a while ago... but that's cool! Good for you!"

"Look! I have paperwork and everything!"

He glanced at the paper, and was about to roll over and resume sleeping, when something that had sat smugly right near the bottom of the first page grabbed him and sat him quite upright. He quickly reread the document and then groaned again.

"Are you serious? They awarded you the house! We all have to move out..."

"Hmm... that's terrible. Really. Why don't you go down to the town hall and see what you can do about that?"

"I think I will! Damn..."

He dragged himself outside and into a pair of tennis shoes and a reluctant, rusting vehicle, then made his way down the street to the town hall.

Once inside, he asked the town clerk to direct him to the zoning and housing board.

"Well, sir, we are closing for the evening. They won't reconvene until three weeks from now."

"Damn. This is kind of important. Is there any way...?"

"I am sorry, sir, but there is really nothing I can do..."

Subterranean

Everybody always starts with the walls. But it is not the walls that get to you at first. It is the light fixture, that solitary bulb taunting you through a thin layer of fresh-sheened glaziure. How little light it casts! How little it matters whether it is on or off! What time is it, day, or night? Who can tell? The light remains, persistent, vigilant. The walls do close in, of course... but that is not at all the first impression a person gets in prison. The rain clouds become your only friends, sympathizing showers of pleasure and fecundity lacking only in tangibility, experienced as if through a screen. And where is the ozone that follows a storm? Where is the smell of snow imminent and looming? A subterranean life is for those of lonely heart and lengthy mind. Failing life is either of those gone awry.

Liquid

The other day, as I watched a dying planet follow its sunken orbit around the careless sun into the blackened void of planetary life, I got to thinking. Usually, on days like that, thinking is the last thing on my mind, but I kept seeing a face that had not been familiar since my childhood.

Her name was Elf, and she ran merrily from couch to counter to the bathroom and back, taking in her new surroundings. As anyone moving into a new house may be, she was a bit nervous about the condition of her living quarters, and of course that of her new roommates. Much to her delight, she found that food was served quite regularly enough, and the couple who lived upstairs seemed nice enough, and didn't fight or make love all too often. However, there was the matter of the children. She had nothing against children, and the little girl seemed just fine, content to suck her thumb and stare at the tv. Often, she would just come and lay on Elf's bed and watch the tv with her, which was much larger than the one upstairs. But the boy... She had a bit more trouble dealing with him. He was energetic and loud! Every morning he would leap from bed and shout that he could see the sun. Some nights he would wail about witches, monsters, or aliens... only to stay up later the next night reading more of the same.

Things went well enough, despite a few problems. The family upstairs would blame her for several problems that may or may not have been her fault, like the time she ate the rest of the chicken, and forgot to dispose properly of the packaging. They treated her rather rudely for a while after that, and the chicken also made her quite sick, a fact she attempted to hide, unsuccessfully, to avoid drawing more fire from her roommates. Also, that boy, on top of his normal annoying and sleep depriving habits, had taken to singing at the top of his lungs after breakfast, coupled with a dance that she liked to call the shuffle-waddle jump. It would have been a tolerable spectacle if it was not for his tendency to land upon items and parts of her anatomy that would rather not be landed on. Besides those issues, life was relatively pleasant.

As I kept thinking on, I began to realize that her passing may have not been the joyous day my family made it out to be.

Late at night, she crept out, completely blank as to where she should deposit her urine. The frequency and urgency of these callings had become quite pronounced, and tonight it had reached a breaking point. It spilled down her leg, and onto the floor. Hurriedly, too embarrassed to clean at all, she rushed to her bed and curled up tight, wishing that she, like the little girl, could comfort herself with a thumb.

What chaotic hell broke loose that morning! First the father shouted and stormed like a graying cloud, then the mother with her shrill thunderclaps drew a raging torrent of sound from within her body. All the while the boy, that hideous boy, danced and laughed while pointing and taunting. Shivering, she wanted to shrink and die among the ant carcasses crowding the narrow slot of the tv stand. The girl, silent with thumb engaged in mouth, carried a ragged blanket to her and allowed her one gentle hug.

Worse and worse the torrents grew, sweeping her away, followed closely by her family. The waves were too strong for her to swim against, and she beat against them and cried, certain that she would never see dry land again. This time it was her own bed that was drenched, and the floor surrounding her had also paid the price of her nightmare. Each day, facing them made her more and more nervous, close to breaking, and as a nervous habit, she drank and drank.

As a child she had decided to run away from home. She had been staying at her grandparent's place while her parents had gone to a retreat to "work things through," and the most horrible time had ensued. Grandma was a nervous old bag of skin and bones who shook at the sight of anything, and Pops was a fat, unshaven drunkard who would awake for midnight meals with a healthy dose of whiskey. During the day they would go rounds, and it was one stormy morning that she had had enough and begged to go outside to play. She didn't take anything, for fear of being discovered, and when grandma snapped, "Yes, yes! Go outside... and don't make me holler for you!" she took the

opportunity and started heading east. Now, lightning had always really frightened her, so when she heard that first clap, felt the rain slap hard against her face, and watched the sky dazzle, she began to gallop hard, rushing with all of the speed she could muster forever eastward. As the sky darkened further, she found her way into a culvert and slept for three days.

Eventually her mind began to serve her, and one morning upon waking, she found that some of the trees were beginning to look a lot like the trees that were found growing on the street of her house. Faster and faster she ran, begging any higher power that might be staring down to earth to guide her back to that warm house. When she finally burst upon the lawn, that precious lawn that she had failed to sight for nearly four weeks, there was not a car in the driveway. Elf found herself staring, heartbroken. As her skin hugged her ribs, she turned slowly and began walking back down the road.

Perhaps this was not her house?

"You there! Don't move!" came a shrill growl from behind. The neighbor had spotted her. "Your parents are going to be so pissed off!" he shouted, a gleam of malice poking out from under his perpetual grimace. She spent the rest of the day tied to a tree, until the family arrived home again one by one.

The boy was, unfortunately, the one to first find her in her most sorry condition. Surprisingly, he fed her and greeted her with the most kindness. The others seemed content to ignore her or smile briefly in her general direction.

Ever since her baleful return to the house, she had been plagued by the nightmares. Now she knew it was too late. There were others in the house by this time; Dusty and Mim, who both hated her. But what could she do? She had become a victim of circumstance, and the waves pounded harder and harder around her head each night.

I barely remember when she died. My parents seemed somewhat relieved, and I had one less playmate to share my silly dances or joyous sunrises with. Apparently euthanasia involves some

sort of blue or pink liquid injected into the intended victim's veins. Fitting, I thought, and left it at that. That was the last time I felt forced to think for a while.

Tyranny

Any power that can be abused will be abused.

— Tyranny Law #1

Abuse always expands to fill the limits of resistance to it.

— Tyranny Law #2

If people don't resist the abuses of others, they will have no one to resist the abuses of themselves, and tyranny will prevail.

— Tyranny Law #3

From Vincent V.G.

Do you remember Raven? She left too, but she didn't put me here. Now there is only Chestnut and a hole. Oh, who put me here again? You hardened, lost it... Fuck, if I could have, I would keep your corpse and shame. Fill it. Fill it up. I cry, they tie me down. My sister says hello. She visited yesterday, and she wishes you well. I could tell she wanted you back, but I know you will try to go back to the moon, since you were never satisfied with those short escapes of youth. You can go to hell, for all of my concern, my love.

My tongue in your ear,

Vincent V.G.

Upon Looking up from the Free Subway Newspaper

We were going to dance in the rivers! We were going to play in the streets, climb fire escapes, and sing on the rooftops... We had planned to drink each other dry until we filled the oceans with joyful tears. You were going to teach me how to paint while I taught you to sing. We might have been on a road in Africa backpacking to tomorrow, or building a yurt in the American southwest. We were going to be the food of life, the joy of love, the fruit of sorrow and the dream of death. We needed to swing from the trees and smoke cigarettes and drink whiskey while the world shook its head disapprovingly. You would squint your eyes while we made love, and I would let you draw in crayons on my back. We knew this as we passed, popsicle dreams melting quickly on the sidewalk, shared swiftly from the depths of our eyes.

Excuse me.

Fire Escape

why would a person do something that kills him

and then complain of a lemming's dislogic

asking questions loses favor

as giving up becomes the answer

dark circles

plaid pants

bed sores

half a lung

the last time he

wrote a song was

nearly a year ago

fever every day

clouds of smoke

destiny's joke

fulfilled without purpose

the last time he

fell in love was

over three years ago

struggles

turning down the heat

breathing ash

begging for the

pain to stop

one last gasp of thought

where are the throngs

imagined so deeply

Choose Trust

Click clickety click. The cheap plastic gears of a manual counting machine, or the checkers in a set of connect four? Perhaps the last piece of a cryptogram snapping snugly into place, or the crackle of settling die. Focus now on...

Astrid, who claims to have dated Ezra and Stiz... the first words in "Money" and the last paragraph of Mother Night. From and a partially destroyed hotel room in West Haven. A pen that gradually remembers how to write, an author that forgets himself in language, and a protein strand that all too well knows its receptor.

Like biology, history, calculus, and physics, the parts, particles, and participles have once again aligned themselves and my eyes have popped open with the shock of stinging cold light. Remember the argument over that phrase?

She runs gleefully down a worn out alley, her destination unnecessarily obscured. Feigning surprise at every twist, she imagines that I am discovering new ground, that I carry more bafflement than the nature of my own importance. A voice speaks directly to my thoughts, telling me things I already recall, warning me of the galvanized barrier to my left at knee height, the scars from which I still remember. I already know all of your secrets save one; what do you wish of me?

I awoke this pitiful afternoon appearing tired and medieval, a cap and dagger my companions. Unlike many, and these are only the successes I am aware of, I cannot bring myself to incorporate sly allusion into my work. Subtlety resides only in my deliberate vagueness. Enslaved to serendipity again, I contemplate the hallucinogenic nature of consciousness. Multiple consciousnesses display openly our fears: my sister's acceptance, my mother's control, Joe's sanity, her loss, my understanding.

~~An~~other pasta and vitamin morning. Lé Tigré's bass lines crudely insert themselves into the apartment like a blunt and vapid cultural reference. If so, exactly so. ~~As~~ the remains of someone

else's allergy prescription trickle down the back of his throat, he finds it no surprise that they might have considered him an outsider, a fed, and infiltrator; so many synonyms for hate. A dirty, quietly boisterous kid with blackened bourgeois costumery; a satire of backpacking youth from the seventies. A lack of proper sentence structure, no verbs in sight, the downward glances, shiftless antiauthoritarianism manifest in silent loathing. He should have been killed on sight, knifed and left in a dripping heap on Avenue C. But he was allowed to sleep feverishly, shivering among the nazi shitheads and strung out groupies, only relating to a handful of drifters. This viral medicine head remembers the sparkle from the mourning's eyes and will reminisce about all of her lies. A vigorous state of confusion grows from an internal revolution, causing him to shift from person to person. He forces his voice back inside himself and moves on.

Standardized testing, although clinically appealing, ruins the intellectual art of teaching. Case in point: when the Nutmeg State decided to incorporate the CAP-T's into the education of high school juniors, every PTA became a clucking roost from which the prized cockle-feathered hen had just been snatched.

"We must adjust the curriculum!"

"Our children's futures depend upon their success in this test!"

The fallacies flew like ejaculations at the feet of worn-out pornstars. As a result, I was taught the art of the persuasive essay. An introduction, with statement of point and a brief overview of three supporting arguments. Three body paragraphs, each with a topic sentence, then proof with supporting evidence. Finally, a conclusion that reiterates the argument and sums up the proof while adding a new angle to the statement and, preferably, answering the opposition's strongest claims. From this, I learned never to write using "I" or what they called the "I-voice," a lesson from which I was to infer that nobody cares about one person's opinion, and an argument is a lot stronger if voiced as if the author were merely a spokes-person for an empowered majority. It was only later that I was to learn that this only applied to the average high school junior, for the masses tend to

listen quite more avidly to the vacuous arguments of famous actors, or infamous politicians, or sometimes both, rather than an empowered majority. ~~Also~~, it was only recently that I discovered that it is entirely possible to be successfully persuasive without following this formula at all. Fancy that.

Floating on the ceiling once again, he ponders whether this character ought to change, or remain static. What major conflicts await him, should he ever get out of bed? Will he ever explain the neural connections rushingly laid out at the onset of this narrative, or will the references to each lay couched in thick verbiage penetrable to only the most hardy of swashbucklingly literary minds with a tolerance for sophmoric 'edge' and tortured diction? ~~At~~ this point, he decides, "Oh, fuck it... I'll eventually find a way out of this, just like I always have. Hit me again, serendipity."

Serendipity is a myth.

So, fair reader, as you will so patronizingly be referred to, I will allow both my laziness and indecision to empower you. Hearkening back to my early reading experiences of the first grade, I will gleefully pilfer one device from those equally poorly written texts known as Choose-Your-Own-~~A~~dventure™. Surely the name is trademarked, if not the method... so we will call this Choose-Your-Own-Protagonist, and keep it our little secret from corporate eyes (lies?)...

TO see our protagonist grow, change, discover and conquer challenges, and follow pre-described narrative formats older than time, turn to the next page.

TO have our protagonist remain static, only leaving his roadside-acquired futon to make food-stamp pasta and play outdated video games, turn two pages ahead.

Ha! You didn't think I would really acquiesce control of this admittedly strained narrative to just any stranger whom I most likely will never speak to, did you? I repeat, ha! Call it megalomania if you must, but this paranoid bipolar neurotic is the alpha and the mega, the horizontal and the vertical, the first, third, and second person, the you me he, omniscio omnes et cetera in adfinitum...

So poop on you.

Turn to the next page for enlightenment.

(also you die a horrible, vaguely existentially awful death of some sort. fall forever into a black hole or something.)

So, you are a reused teabag and toaster-oven pastry folk like myself... figures.

Speaking of figures, I can see them flickering in shadows across the ceiling that I intended to paint with clouds. When I still heard the children shrieking laughter from the playground of the backyards as my parents enforced an afternoon nap, I dreamed a gnome was running behind my bed, stealing my ideas to take me to the unfettered shores of insanity. I could have sworn I was awake. We all share common dreams, of falling, of losing teeth, of fighting, and of being chased. One of these may keep you awake at night. I dream of going mad.

I wake up, and sunshine cuts my vision like the back side of a dollar store knife or a dime store analogy. I know I have been awake for more than forty hours now. Choking victims gurgle from the stereo, gurgles choke mutedly from the radiator, and Adam drones aimlessly at the telephone. I'm sure his head would forget him when it's leaving for home.

Self-Diagnosis

Mentally divergent. Type II Schizophrenia. Previously diagnosed as Bipolar. Revised opinion after increasing dosage of Lithium five times in the last month, and electro-neural external stimuli treatment of both last wednesdays.

(i hear things. the queen is mad, not deaf: off with my head!)

Last hospitalized three years ago. Spurned by Sophia Loren. Millionaire playboy with affinity for caves.

(i'm lonely. dark vengeance provides solace. he killed my parents.)

Current treatment includes oral ~~Abilify~~ and Talto dextrin Sulfide. No evidence of multiple personality disorder. Mild psychosis. Intravenous Sodium Pentathol?

(i never killed anyone. yet they try me...)

From Mamie VanDoren

Sorry to use a postcard, but they won't let me near envelopes after last week. Scissors work better anyway, so I'll just get some of those. Anyway, I just wanted to let you know that Chestnut has been staying with me, and we're in love.

Ciao bella,

Mamie VanDoren.

It's raining again, and I have stolen more library books than I'd like to admit. My feet sweat and freeze as these clothes grow old in my inactivity. The ideal woman is the one who hurts you the most for the least about of time. So here I waste, on the floor of the damp odored closet, door closed, hoping that my situation will change, but fully aware of the utter impossibility of will to change the past. I suppose this begs an explanation.

Right after the question mark suit finishes screaming at me, I am charged by a wild-haired representative for the Christian Children's Fund, who follows a train into the living room... Don't you tell me what not to attempt... I'll attempt whatever I damn well please. A hole sits, idly drawing thoughts Bernoulli-like through the ravaged abyss boiling in my skull. No explanation. Just gone. I watched Billy Idol scrap for shekels, and as he makes the Sex Pistols seem like a real rebellion, I smoke twenty-six cigarettes in an attempt to dig this worm out of my brain. It just grins at me, and the scars of my dark muse burn deep into my heart. I imagined that swine from A Current Affair pegged to cardboard like a moth, mouth agape, and watched the sun creep angrily over the sole shock of green near the horizon. I may never know why. Maybe should call that toll free number for back pain. Darkness is not an answer. Everybody hates Max Weinberg, even when he creeps to the high school for a free drum workshop. Still flogging Kucinich... our Alan Keyes.

So I have a thing for girls with glasses. I don't know why. I never trusted her. I know why now.

No sleep until the sun. Wake at eight. Blistered fingers. Never saw her friends, family, or even an ID. Manufactured love. Drive that car. I did catch your name? Pyrrhus?

A whore is dragging her syphilitic carcass along the whispering sands that scorch her bloated features. The secrets drive her mad, soft words tearing at flesh. For what?

Too perfect. Too good to be true. Cliché, but eerily accurate. Now I'm followed by NBC's fresh faith vs science tripe. Who else like the smell of matches, whiskey, wild sex, literary criticism, long days on the couch, and dumpster dates as much as I do?

Puppy Friend! I miss you more... How do they think their cat food is the best tasting... I knew cat people ate it! I knew it!!! Why else would they buy that overpriced organic shit? Cats don't care about pesticides, they're predators. Someone, quick, write a pop song for all the kids... make it a throwback to Morrisey and Robert Smith, or she'll never listen to it. Make sure to give her a savage beating at the end. Now there are enough butts to roll two more...

I don't wish assassination on anyone, excepting the sitting president (in any given year... it's a proper elixir for psychopathy and unrivaled ambition), but what a marvelous stampede it would be, perpetrated by late night TV hosts, if this man were to be shot... who will be the first to mention that Monaco just got its Prince ~~Al~~bert pierced... sex thing my ass... let's see them fill that blank. I'll keep this notebook by the bed like a vomit bucket and make her my queen. Sedate me? I'll snore of my own volition and eat only when I'm hungry. Where's the remote?

The only CD I have that she liked is "Punk You," a collection subtitled "audio for the discerning slacker punk." In reality, it is mostly new wave trash, like Blondie. Fuck Blondie. Poser scenester bastards and their corporate crap... I'd rather crack heads to some lame-o two bit apathy puppet grinders like Blink than sit through her vague pseudopolitick rants... But this is coming from a guy with flannel pants and a track shirt? Well, fuck ye, Jim lad... ye can taste me ticklish testes... And I'll go wash my hands out with soap.

Last night I fell in love with HS Thompson, and jacked off to imagining him limply thrusting at the edge of the bed, his pallid man sweat trickling down to my clit, while he shakily caressed my lower back. And what did she ever do but lie limply and fuck hard? Sometimes lies aren't fun anymore... But I'm over it in the head. It's the rest of me that can't stop thinking about her, and this scares me deeply.

Sleep

to not sleep.

for every crushing weight to be placed upon my heart.

lie, dependent and dreamless, freeze to ice, find a way to

stop burning

wondering when sense will return

will the work be done

when are we free

process

turn and tumble among the sheets

a wood fire or a bomb

out the window asks

do we live

when we die

a balloon floats above our heads

it will have to

pop

the pull of

the past is

the pall over

us.

never leave your

hometown

is

it

safe

wont know until we cross the river

kneel

and live for the dainty mistress

chaste

unassuming

and quite deadly

flames lick at honors door

sleeping on

realizes he can dream in spectra

but only of naked

virgin

land

for every life saved by plastic

forty are lost in its production

for every ambulance running on gasoline

there are 4Ø ØØØ people dying of cancer from its fumes

and they don't know it yet

but they do suspect something is quite wrong

but how would anyone react

if

and only if

they could see the cancer for what it is

not what it offers

to war

boys

to war

it is

and always has been

the way of the west

Purple

It always would smell so pretty on the west side of town where they manufactured the dreams, living among us on the east side. In no case catch us on the flip. Dreams, toughest prey since the eagles began to rot in their nests, got younger by the day and died as children. Thus, when the robots made us satisfied we had controlled the world, production once again became the goal. To manufacture was to raise from the dead a child, although when it began they had lived full lives. The entropic process would come to an end; we had just begun to understand this. Standing under was no position for us, no sir. Of course, a realization has met with violence, and some of the factories had begun to shut down. When I was born, I waited three years before my handing off ceremony, when I found bliss in the west, as we all do around that magic. So a young girl led me, and of course I still carry her. To this day and beyond. But on the fourteen, so pretty the smell remains, but underneath, the hated path, another stink began to gather. Withering youth. To die backwards was to never live. Oneness had failed to the one. We lay a shriveled people, waiting for youth to find us in our old age. Once the man discovers the child, he must die. But the child kept shrinking. I felt the average was only four. ~~As~~ time went on I began the lovely spiral towards apathy, and for a while I remembered nothing. By then The Whole Town stunk. I left a resounding wake as i wallowed through the corpses of infants and smiled. Who, me? Well, I never. Say such things to a cynical gnome discovering the embryo. Deserve what you get.

i'm sorry

leftsideclosingandthatsmellneverleftanyonealoneisnotthesameasfreetodayonlya
chanceofalifetimeshorterthanyouwishcanbringhopeanotherropeuponwhichwehangy
ourselfforexampleaheadonapikecaughtintheriverflowsbloodfromtheheartttothelun
gfishingforcompliments yourdresswelldrinksandchampagnehappyhouronnewyearsev
ekissthatneverbroughtlovetheoneidealthecardswhichpromisedyouiwouldnotdiemy
darlingtheknifeinyourneckawishbroughtbyacontractthebuildingofacruelcruelhate

From Sonia Effervescent

Everything has come back into focus this week. Are you back in town? Let me catch you up on what's been happening down at the hospital... They have me on these new meds that are really working out, and I'm eating regularly again. They tell me that if I keep improving, I can be out of here in a few weeks. Julie and I plan to get an apartment near school, and the wedding is probably going to be in June... I know, how cliché, right? But so is writing letters from an asylum... I'm sure it's been done before. Life like science, science like art, art like math, math like language, and language like life. C'est la vie passionnante, eh? I miss you. I just wish I could have a normal life. Without pills. Yet, I know hiding them under my tongue is what got me in here, so I'll play ball and go home.

See you there,

Sonia Effervescent

TOmorrow

much the way all

philOsophers are

asshOles

smirking in secret

LObariteries of lObetomy pOsthastrophe

on gaping hOle smokes

like a clOud

on accent

can hide true

intention a cruel joke running

away tO some southern

state dreams alight

of trading two

Jacks for

a ROyal Flush

and the

pipes are

clOgged upagain

in an abOrtive attempt tO

clean them imagining that she is

much clever and mØreso than even she

is a cOokie with a bite missing

Never a Farewell Just see yOu

tomorrow on the apocalypse for

tomorrow never comes.

"I don't believe this! You move back home, and now you can't give me the time of day!" He was visibly agitated. "Some friend you turned out to be... you just want me around as some dipshit acquaintance."

"You know that's not true!" She was nearly as livid. "I can't devote my life to making you feel needed! If you want to make this so fucking difficult, you got it!" Se slammed the phone down, self-satisfied, and realizing she had missed the receiver, slowly replacedthe handset to its proper location.

He returns to his painting. On an 'S' shaped canvas, he has already rendered a building, decaying, that had captured his interest in recent weeks. In the foreground, an outline of a woman's face appears.

She moves alone, a sea widow, responsibility past. In a bubble, another seahorse appears for a moment, grossly inflated, before vanishing rapidly towards the surface. Everyone knows seahorse dreams are impossible.

"...now I don't have exact figures, but suffice it to say that significantly more of this sphere is below water than above it. By the time they figured out we had superiority, it would be too late."

The skate let out a long sigh, and left her behind for greener algae.

I am the dark center, the star of pain, clutching inward and scraping at my prison. Drowning in gutters, expelling torrents of blood, I am visible even when you close your blind little eyes. I am dots of suffering, and I have come to destroy your world.

There are two of them, bouncing down the streambed in a splashy reverie. She splashes, he yelps, and the sunlight paints their faces golden brown.

"I just don't see why you won't consider it!" laughs Self-Assured.

"Honestly, I didn't expect you to understand..." attempts Privately Opinionated.

Somewhat Indignant retorts, "You never think I can understand anything! Just because you're stubborn and too damn idealistic, you are going to toss out a chance to follow your dreams for life!"

Suddenly Remorseful drags a toe along a mossy rock, leaving ripples in its wake. He circles a water-strider, and slowly responds, "I don't mean to discount your opinion, but there are certain sacrifices that, well, I can't accept... even for the security..."

Mollified squeaks, taps him quickly on the head once, then promptly forgives him. Relieved suddenly becomes Panic-Stricken-and-Prone, and begins to bleed profusely from his nose and mouth, sullying the once virgin stream.

The empty page...

(not a gift,

but a weapon)

Stutter and Fail

He had never written a poem before

Only stories

Weapons like words

Purpose transparent and acidic

You were more beautiful today

Than in 1,ØØØ dreams

All starring you, a

Different face in each one, every time.

From Sylvia Plath

Fuck! You mother mole rat mother cunt-raiding ass monkey shit smearing cock worshipper! That bitch ate me tandem to sail to the fried corporate soul slave trade. You fucked me, the best fuck I ever had, strapped me to a bed, injected reason, raped humanity, stripped raw and aching flesh. She hung me in the smoke shack and you grinned, beating me beautiful! Where do you cower now, slice of shit pie?! Gone. Empty hole in aorta. I'm calm. I'm fine. I never smiled so much as yesterday, or the yesterday that hides behind it. I know them now. Because I will destroy you. No Chestnut. No Raven. No Cheerleader, even. I'm recording your dance of death on VHS-C and showing the grandparents, motherfucker.

Sitting on your head,

Sylvia Plath.

Mysteries make uneasy

Pain heals art

Dreams often wrong

Change who you are

With the push of a button

"Christ, you can be difficult to deal with!" Lee exclaimed, exasperated. They were in one of those overlarge fluorescent nightmares that cover the nation while tossing every small business in their path into the gaping maw of Chapter 11. At this point in their conversation, they were wandering through the sections that had been dedicated to summer, and what this particular corporation believed summer to mean. As in the past, they were only here to kill time before Cosmic Bowl started at the T-lanes down the street. Also as in the past, they were on the verge of creating a disturbance that would result in them finding their way to the door with security escorts.

"Oh, come on," his companion attempted, "don't you tell me you have never dealt with moments of indecision before... purple or red... it's a difficult choice! Hey, look! This is perfect for you! A lizard hat! And look... stuffed lizards, too! He rammed the hat on Lee's head while handing him the stuffed animal. This was what prompted the outburst that would find them on the sidewalk.

"Why do you always think that I want this lizard crap! You are always pointing out lizard this, lizard that! I mentioned once that I thought that this ONE lizard in this ONE zoo was pretty cool looking, and now you assume that everything even remotely lizard-related is an object that I desire unendingly!"

"Sorry, dude, but..." he interjected.

"But nothing! I've had it with these lizards, and I've had it with this new self-righteous attitude that accompanied you from wherever the hell you disappeared to for all those years. You couldn't be bothered to call me even once, and then you reappear believing that you understand everything. Well, you don't! You never understood a lot of things, and you sure as shit don't anymore. Most especially things about me!"

"OK, first of all," he replied calmly, "I did call you. On your birthday, on Christmas, and for the going away party. You were even invited to my shows in the city. You just never returned

any of my calls, and since you were too busy to actually answer your phone, I just gave up on trying to call you. And second, I understand I lot more than you could imagine." At this, Lee turned to respond, and noticed a fast-moving object approaching his face. Tasting blood, he caught a glimpse of the generic lighting and a security camera dome before the blackness consumed him.

He awoke with a headache and a scar. Flickering cylinders and piping winked red as the world dimmed bruise blue, suffusing his visual path with a glowing mysticism. His friend from the store approached, and he began to wonder what was so different about the bowling alley's bar. A tiny green shape made its indistinct way hurriedly across the left side of the relatively small room, and Lee was beginning to feel both very uneasy and strangely comfortable.

"We aren't at the bowling alley, are we?" asked Lee. His companion shook his head slowly. "Then where are we? And why the hell did you punch me?" His companion merely shrugged, and began to walk through a doorway that seemed to have just appeared. Becoming increasingly unnerved, Lee hurried after him, pestering him with questions that mostly just repeated themselves. When his companion finally stopped and turned to face him, they were in another room that looked identical to the last, except there was a small girl in the corner, her face curled into her knees, and a tree that, although fully grown, only reached their waists. Lee slowly noticed these things, and stepped over to investigate the tree first. Although the trunk had appeared green from a distance, he discovered that this color was created by lizards, proportionately small, which covered the trunk and were feverishly building supports for the giant flat leaves. At this point, Lee found he could not speak. He turned to the girl in the corner and desperately tried, but his voice just wouldn't come.

"Do you remember your first wife?" his friend gently inquired.

The girl lifted her head, and looked straight at Lee. He froze, petrified. Her face appeared featureless but for the impressions of her knees and tears. With one shockingly fast leap, she mounted Lee's hips. While grinding her pelvis mindlessly into his, she stabbed him in the chest sixty-three times, then pulled herself off of him and undid his pants. Horribly, her face appeared, and

She began vigorously sucking his dick as he gasped for breath. His lungs collapsing and filling with blood, Lee was finally able to make a sound. He whimpered, "Christine..." and flailed his arms about, searching for a weapon. His fingers brushed the lizard-coated tree trunk, and he gripped it, pulled it, and finally found a lizard in his fingers. At once, he gripped it so firmly that it cracked, then jammed it down his throat. As his breathing slowed, he found four more lizards and ate them slowly, savoring them, and the girl faded from sight, allowing Lee to drift into a painful slumber.

Not much had changed when he awoke. Feeling fuzzy, and with a slight headache, Lee sat up, and noticed his friend perched cross-legged on one of the cylinders. His friend spoke, "I see you have found the lizards."

"You know, after the divorce, we remained intimate for a time..." His friend nodded, allowing Lee to continue. "She was a lesbian. I don't understand what she got out of..." Climbing down from the cylinder, his companion held up his hand for silence, and answered, "The lizards are a path you have chosen. This path leads to darkness." He then fell silent, burning his stare into Lee.

At this point, Lee noticed that there was now a cage in the corner, and its occupants were creating quite a racket. Naturally curious, he approached the cage.

"Friends of yours?" his companion asked.

"My... brothers?"

The cage, in fact, contained three irate, bespectacled monkeys, one smaller that the others, who were actively engaged in attempting to noisily escape their imprisonment. Directly above the cage, another girl hopped onto a tire swing, spread her legs, and started to cry as urine darkened the inside of her capri cut jeans. She hung limply on the swing as it rocked idly. Lee released an aborted screech and the monkeys clapped and screamed along with him, baring grinsthat pulled their lips over their skulls.

"She's gone forever, sir." spoke his friend.

"No she's NOT!" squealed Lee, "She's right there!"

"NO, she isn't. She is gone." The monkeys took this up as a chorus, taunting him with "SHE IS GONE, SHE IS GONE, SHE IS..."

Almost to himself, Lee mumbled, "I could let them out of the cage..."

"You could," his friend firmly answered, then continued sadly,

"but they would kill me. They'd probably kill you, too."

"But what should I do?!" Lee cried. The new girl slipped through the swing feet first, glasses hanging crazily, and her chin caught the edge of the seat as her body arced toward Lee's face. His friend shrugged and sat down again.

"I don't need you anymore!" shrieked Lee hysterically, "I'm not in charge! I'm not taking over!" He ran, and the floor opened a jagged rift beneath him. Beyond the rumbling earth, lizards danced with a man's corpse swinging from a coffin, and another, impossibly giant lizard came pounding out from the fissure. The strangled girl fell to the floor, and the monkeys fell silent for the first time since Lee awoke. She struggled to her knees, opening her mouth wide, gaping above her mangled neck. The lizard blinked and cocked its head curiously. Lee was trapped between them, with no avenue of escape. The giant reptile gaped his mouth widely as well, and the girl's mouth was growing and growing as she dragged her bloated cadaver towards him for the kill. The lizard continued to mimic this grotesque display, and the dancing coffin in the distance was subsumed by green. Tears streaming down his face, Lee fled the hanged girl, and leaped into the abyss between the giant lizard's jaws. The darkness quickly dispersed, and Lee wobbily stood, an emerald tail jerking spasmodically in the corner of his mouth. He swallowed, and crushed the head of the tiny, fragile doll before him with his heel. As the world swam around him, Lee began vomiting profusely, lizard tails pouring down his chin, and he curled into a ball and passed out.

In the hospital bed, Lee felt the stitches over his left eye. His friend was snoring on a chair nearby, sitting astride a countertop which overflowed with jars containing cotton balls, tongue depressors, and other assorted medical paraphernalia. The permanence of white was everywhere, blinding the path of god.

"Fuck me..." Lee moaned, "It's always an adventure..."

His friend awakened, and flashed a sheepish grin. "Damn, we can never just go bowling, can we, princess?"

Lee stared disapprovingly at his friend. "Did you have to hit me, man?"

"Why, the old lady gonna bitch about you coming home with a busted eye?"

"Nah, man... Hey, sorry about snapping on you like that... I guess, I..."

"I know man. I'm sorry too... and I don't like thinking about it either... it was really hard to lose her. I mean, you know, without my sister, I didn't really have much of an anchor keeping me around here, you know..."

"Yeah, I wish I could have left, too... I remember you telling me that it would end badly when you found out we were getting married..."

"That's not exactly what I meant."

"I know... that's why we both hated it when you were right. I just wish you had been, you know, around."

"I know, man. I'm sorry... but you were a fucking mess, too..."

"Yeah..." Lee sighed, then stared at the seam between the ceiling and wall as silence coated the room.

"Hey, Lee... you can leave here, right?"

"I don't know... I guess..."

"Why don't we go down to Milner's and I'll pick us up a pitcher, huh? And a few shots of Jameson, too..."

Lee's stomach turned at the suggestion, and he thought for a

minute before responding, "You know, I think I'm going to lay off the drinking for a while."

"What, like those stupid 'month of health' things you were always trying when we lived at the old apartment?"

"No, I'm thinking like, forever, man."

"Really? Like, forever?" Lee met his incredulous eyes with a steady gaze. "Wow."

"Yeah... but let's go bowling, though..."

"No can do, man... You've been out for hours, and it's already past one, so the lanes are closed... but hey, buck up... I swiped something for you as we were dragged out of the store."

He reached into his trench coat and pressed something small and soft into Lee's hands.

Bewildered, Lee looked down, and found himself clutching a stuffed lizard.

Slim

Ringing is the sound of battle wearing on and weaving. Loss the angry mistress cries. Down down down the deep hole losing thoughts and rhyming, believe only in the one true currency above us all the weight which we create. I am not we alone among the many few who do not see and live only to criticize the blatant melee of feet and luscious leftover pasta no ruin. Love love love over my dead body drop no rose from the dead to bring back a message peace one at a time and left to the right of silver glowing brooks brothers give away your souls your cars your money machines and the machines that make them. Live alone as one not many be the path down the lane tralala red caped and dreaming. Slim the monkey watches back the man and the woods leaning on the pole to stand a grove of trees is an oasis and pools of fetid babies you can drive my everything man away from here to go et ergo mehis fronte id hoc legere carpe morte est. Damp and moist and sponge up the mess of empty beercan life be more than we dream i am not me you are not we away away away.

Demonstrative

hollywood liberals are not going to save our souls. they may want to, but they won't. who would give up a m3 for a molotov? a beach house for a bomb? there are no more Americans. there is no longer an America. we have seen in our lifetimes the christian right fuck jesus christ up the ass with a rusty crowbar while telling a man in riker's island that it isn't rape because he is gay. wherever ideals fall, an empire rises. the war has not just begun. the war has been raging for ages. this is a war like the earth creates an island. this is a war fought how a universe creates a lungfish. and yet we suffer. suffering like a warm bath. the water has been cooling for ages. we either move or die from hypothermia. in a simmering pool of lava, the angriest bubbles rise up. rise up.

TO Spraypainted Martyrs from ~~Aerosol~~ Heroes

The glass enclosed candle is a self-regulating system: if the flame burns too brightly, the wax melts too quickly, and the flame diminishes. ~~As~~ the flame diminishes, the wax on the perimeter hardens, which allows the flame to burn higher. If the wick gets too close to the side, however, the glass on that side overheats, the wax cannot harden, and the wick floods. Once this occurs, the candle may require management to remain alight. More often than not, this management will lead to the candle burning out prematurely. If we cannot properly manage a simple inorganic system such as a candle, what leads us to believe that we are the masters of a complex organic system such as a planet? Practice.

From Kurt Cobain

I'm sorry.

How are you? I live in coma. My kidneys are failing from lithium. I cough more than I smoke, or I smoke more than the ground where Iraqi children once stood. You bled for me, and I feel it dribble from my nose. How Egyptian. We're in love with the devil now, aren't we; having turned our backs on the star, we have no choice but to eat our own shit. Remember how we were our own parasites in high school? Now everything but my stomach hurts, and I'm pretty sure they won't let me near one now, anyway. A shell-slinger, that is. Not that I'll need to indulge in the wall mounted impressionism of skull and blood to leave now. Renal function will take its selfish corpse. Oh! The lengths I have gone to to make you stay... killing us both. If only you were a plucked and bound canary, this coal mine would be safe.

Love and sweaters,

Kur(d)t Cobain.

Neil Young sells out to Jack Kerouac

there is a fur that grows on the traveling mind. it accumulates as fear, hatred, rage, and apathy. a rust, a corrosion, scales. how do we remove these barnacles? don't you wish it was possible. advice after fucking a duck? don't collect them in the first place.

Christmas: n.

A holiday, stolen from pagans by Christians, then stolen by capitalists. Originally celebrated in Mesopotamia to celebrate the new year with the death of the king, the re-appropriated version celebrates the birth (death?) of the king of the Jews with intensive, month long shopping, book-ended by two separate feasts of overeating, and culminating in forced worship attendance followed by awkward familial gatherings during which expensive trinkets are exchanged.

See also Times Square, Coca-Cola, Shopping Mall.

Nutmeg: n.

A psychotropic nut from the West Indies, which, when taken in quantities of 2 or more nuts, ground, results in a marijuana-like haze that lasts for at least a day and results in severe dehydration and anticapitalist ranting.

See also Malcolm X, Hallucinogens.

Insects

Globules of water beat hard into the earth, and consciousness floods in as morning light to the eye. One ladybug survives, colliding again and again into the faint warmth of an incandescent fixture.

Tap, tap, tap.

One bright and sunny day, I walked among the waves of sand and shoals of water that shared the beach with the crowd. Always, the crowd was summoned by long scorching days that made a person weak and lazy. Music played intermittently, and the boys and girls played their silly sex games. I looked for a place to smoke. Beach people like to give a man a funny look if he smokes on the beach, and the eye is everywhere, waiting to send the bacon. Having given up meat many years ago, I had no taste for the bacon. Every grain of burning sand made its presence known to my exposed feet by way of painful stabbing, but I walked on. Three weeks ago, everyone had added to the general chatter news of shark attacks on the rise. What a silly idea, when a person can wipe out so many others with a simple plan or the push of a button. The sharp edge of land and sea remained full of the swarms of vacationing families and friends, mingling and eating ice cream till it dribbled from their chins. There were so many umbrellas, I began to wonder if there was a spot without shade along the entire coast. A path beckoned me away from the low hum of the temporary ocean people, and I finally sat down in an abandoned chair at the back of a hidden dump and had a smoke.

The wind has lost its love, and cries. Flashes of beetles covering the wall, the screen, the ceiling. When summer ends, the eggs must drop somewhere where cold cannot live. Sunlight on a windowsill...

I returned to the ocean's edge, walked a ways along the boardwalk, and stopped in to grab some food at the pavilion. An eager redhead shouted my order toward a grill that was cleaned once this year. She was cute, not shining beautiful like my pretty baby, but fun to flirt with for a minute or two. I'm sure she wondered if I'd return. I remained indifferent despite my evil nature,

and continued along. Tripping over a blanket laid in the middle of a thousand blankets, I accidentally disturbed a couple feverishly crawling over one another. I doubt they differentiated my apology from the noise of the volleyball games, or that of the little children desperately digging holes by the waves.

The ladybugs and flies and beetles and daddy longlegs all fight for air on the windowsill. Warmth and sweat and lust fight like desperate dogs. As the years grew newer, the desperation in one final escape became a manic frenzy. Three spiders became seven thousand. Ladybugs and locusts danced to trample the skins of their fathers. The sill disappears despite the light.

I strum my guitar and miss her. She is basically dead to me now; I have found a little plug that I can turn sideways to fill a giant hole. Nonetheless, I still drive by her house every once in a while... No, actually, every once in a while I drive by her house a lot. I look in the yard for her face, never daring to peek in her bedroom window. I come back maybe a few times a week, driving by casually like I have some place to go, and then I just stop at the park down the street. Usually this happens after I have tortured myself with a lonely summer surrounded by people in the sand where we once never made love. A football has landed nearby, showering my guitar case with sand and shattering my depressive daydream. The guitar returns to the case.

Insects disappear. Gradually they all wonder where the others have gone. The windowsill, great blue sky swallowing behind it, becomes bare; the earth frozen dry beneath it. One ladybug remains.

Tap, tap, tap.

Ok, so I always beat his ass in video games. I lent him my SNES, and bought some new games off of ebay. We usually get drunk and play Ken Griffy Jr. Baseball. The last 4 World Series have been mine and mine alone. Tonight it has been quite a different experience, for despite his extreme level of drunkenness, I have lost three games in a row to him. If we drink more stinking beer, the world will fade away and I will leave everything behind me. Never have I been so behind the excellent death of my own persona, but here we are, listening to Ernie Botts ramble on about his lost love and stupid obsessions. Wonder why she never called me back? Why have I lost myself to such loss? No No No is not such a great song but the chords are spectacular. On cold nights, she looked up to see the same stars as he did, but for her they burned so bright, piercing her cold unfeeling retinas and leaving the image there in a faint yet recognizable pattern that she could only see if she closed her eyes really tightly and counted to seven.

One night I decided to drown myself. I took a pair of tweezers, a pen, and my Dubuque notebook down to the ocean. I said goodbye and fuck off to the people I respectively loved and reviled, and went out for a swim. Out past the buoys, I saw a stupid ship with a party, no doubt attended by some scummy privileged inbred 2" dick piece of shit son of a senator and his fuck you for an internship cadre of 5' 2" blonde haired blue eyed we went to private school to learn how to get ahead learn how to sell your soul for a piece of the pie never knew art bimbo barbie is my best friend bitches, and I wanted to kill them instead. Lacking any sort of armament, I began to devise a plan.

Thirty-four minutes later I had doused myself in a tuxedo and, after some provocative and sensual dancing with an individual with particularly low self esteem and enough blood alcohol as to spend time with me, I had secured keys to the master bedroom. Many people do not realize that even tropical species of jellyfish migrate to the northern half of the planet in these increasingly warm and even equatorial summers, but I did. By the time he could even begin feel his dick again,

I was smiling and in my 2ØØ1 Jetta, listening to vintage Nirvana and wishing I had brought a camera. Let us sing to the moon.

Wasn't I proud of that car! It took me at least two weeks to realize it had all been a big mistake. I realized I was spending more time driving to work in the car than driving anywhere else, and anywhere else is where I would have rather been going, but I had to pay for the car. The memory of my most recent, if brief, foray into the seedy underbelly of oceanography had only convinced me of the fact that life is fleeting and therefore to be taken not at all seriously. So I was in no hurry to dump my car off a cliff or bury it in the soft sand down by my great-grandmother's trailer park. But I did need money, or the Volkesvagan ss would do all the disposal for me, leaving me with no ride and nothing shiny and red in my life, except for my girlfriend, who was more red than shiny and a little more red and less shiny every day.

Sometimes in the middle of the night I wake up with a cramp in my left thigh. I suppose it goes back to my middle adolescence, the time when I stopped a bicycle from continuing on its path with my left thigh. At any rate, what I decided I must decide to do was rob a a lot of defenseless grannies of their family heirlooms and sell them at auction.

I would pose as a man with a unclassified but nevertheless innocent fetish for antiques of every kind, including, if need be, human antique grannies. Drinking beer, however, has a curious effect on one's will and resolve to get things done, so I soon found myself lying in bed not dreaming rather than spiriting from house to house in Palm Springs. This, in many ways, is the manner in which my life is led.

She wonders where he went that night. After the splash, which everyone on board had assumed was James Farnsworth IV merely tossing in a net to demonstrate his nautical pedigree, a common occurrence at these parties, she had nearly resigned herself to a night of not getting laid when James himself had come running up to her, or at least near her, with an urgent look upon his face. She knew an opportunity when she saw one, so when he covered her with his arms, began to drag

her to the hold (she loved being roughed up before sex) and whispered in her ear, she waited until the moment was right, then crashed violently down onto his mouth. He pulled away just long enough to gasp, "Please, quickly... Take them off... So hot..." This she of course was happy to do, although he seemed less happy than relieved as she undid his belt. His face seemed more bloated than usual... and he seemed paradoxically more sober than usual... so she paused, testing him out, before bending to pull out some chap-stick and a condom she had hidden in her sandals when he smacked her sharply in the ass with both hands (a little harder than necessary, she thought) and blurted, "No! Now godfuckingdammit!!!" At this, she was thinking about leaving in a huff, but biology got the better of her (she wonders why she always ends up dating assholes) and she straightened to her full height. She had intended to arch sexily over his torso, hanging her breasts over his chest, then slowly begin the sensuous dance she had been waiting for all night. (a rather experienced friend has assured her of the certainty of this evening, and "a nice guy too, they are all so nice") She hadn't expected James! However, upon turning to face him, she discovered he had already worked his pants off and had continued working on himself (more rapidly and less efficiently than she had ever seen anyone work before) with his hands pressed tightly together. It looked to her as if he was hurting himself because he was whimpering with the most agonized look on his face, but then she remembered how Mike used to get just before he would climax. God, how she missed him. At this, she flopped down backwards on the bed next to him and followed suit, and when she was done working (she failed to notice if he had finished) she passed out on the irony of a ship-mounted waterbed. Now, as she sits listening to Mr. Botts wail on about Spinmaster Flash, she thinks it rather odd that she would have such a brief encounter with her first real boyfriend from high school that night, only to have him vanish again and leave her with the autoerotic James. She says nothing. She paints a little and looks at the stars.

Now, soon after I had purchased my car I had discovered that it floats, just like the Beetle in those old commercials. I suppose every new car owner has that strange period after his first accident where he decides to toss caution to the winds, drive straight into the ocean, and collect on

that stupid GAP insurance that of course he has purchased. Most people, of course, do not follow through on this whim. I, on the other hand, have these strange moments where I overcome my chemical-induced malaise and decide to accomplish something. May 2, 2ØØ1, at 4:35 AM, one of these moments was upon me. I was quite bewildered to find myself out by that damn set of buoys and no wetter than the fish on the deck of a passing boat. Since that day (paddling a 3ØØØ pound car with a hockey stick through the windows on either side is no picnic, believe you me) I have taken to stowing a small outboard motor in the spare tire well. Since my deductible is paid for the year, I can have my car repainted whenever I want. How handy! Especially if, upon returning to shore and drying off from a long swim, I decide to change, grind up an especially painful (almost deadly) tropical jellyfish, dump the extract into a flask, grab some super glue and head on over to an especially swingin' New England party. Now I have never been an especially murderous sort, but tonight I had gotten sick of it all in a rather trite manner. As I gently nosed the Jetta into the side of the 4Ø' Wood Paneled "Ritchie Wrong" and moored her, I scanned the boat for her rudder and engine controls, found them, and clambered on up, flask grimly in hand. The particular glue I had chosen was the nonstandard slow drying kind, but it would work quite well if i was clever and quiet. It is a good practice to be quite quiet when you are disabling a ship's controls with slow-drying super glue. Then that douchebag im a prince of nantucket my daddy buys me beer burst in, eyes ablaze. I thought I was busted until I realized that he couldn't see me because he was staring down the dress of his companion, a one miss everything has passed me by and i can't get a job with my communications degree from stonehill so ill get a rich husband with my almost attractive cousins yer brother face and enormous breasts. Hooray! I slipped away and quietly spiked the punch with some especially painful (almost deadly) moonshine. I suspect that the punch had already been expertly spiked, but I required chaos. From the control room I faintly heard a squealing "I'm a captain! HEEHEEEEEE!" and turned to look. But then, then I saw her, a ghost screaming at me to kill the pain of my old and broken heart. She danced drunkenly over and my plans were almost forgotten. We chatted briefly, and I noticed that she had become more self-loathing than ever. A matched pair, we. I burned for her, and it singed a little. She slung her arms around my neck and, pressing a

keyring into the hand I had taken the liberty of placing inside her thigh, slurred in a drunken kitten voice, "Downbstairz... see if you wantto play?" Fuck the plan. Butthen the rich jackass jumps on the table and starts doing his obscene version of the "krishna krishna" with his sack hanging from his fly and his palms pressed together overhead. He seems a little concerned about pulling his hands apart and topples dick first into the punch bowl. I decided to give new old romance a pass and get the hell-o nurse out of there. As I jumped at where my car should have been moored, I noticed a short blonde girl with huge tits trying desperately to free her hair of her hand and a probably expensive, certainly tacky captain's hat. Thank god I got the heated seats.

The Day in Drisma

I was having a sunny day and so were you. We were all eating chocolate and birds didn't choke on our balloons. We had all won the war. Slavers and slaves made peace and drank nicely in little rows or however they felt like sitting without being rude. Many were taking lovely potions and you were so beautiful. We danced and I don't dance. We sang and you don't sing. Everyone was laughing and painting and dreaming the beautiful thoughts like bubbles. Money and war and oppression and religion had all died in their last battle. There were just enough clouds in the sky and there was just enough wind. I held your face in my arms and we wept.

I kept waiting for something terrible to happen. A zeppelin was going to fall from the sky in flames, or the ground would shift and we would all be swallowed up. The armies of darkness would be sewn together from the dead and we would be forced to labor again until the end of the stars. Our sun would burn us to shit and die, cold and black. Music and love and art would die dramatic deaths while we died like hounds. Our wounds would never heal and our chains would strain, oiled with sweat and often blood.

But our sun continued to shed photons at an even rate. Our slavers and our fathers said no cross words. All remained in Balance and wisdom grew. The simple and the stellar shared their gifts as the afternoon's brilliant blue faded into evening's gentle gold. We all slept by the fires, friends and lovers in repose, rocking with the planet's great ocean. You smiled, and I peacefully faded away.

At night the fires had spread. As I slept on, you screamed your murder on in the night as the fires grew. You fought on and on, but the fire was far too strong. You began to lose and cried out to me a gentle apology. I rose, slow and blurry, and could not see the fire. He had hidden himself in his great container. I remember now that you were born of the fire, not of the plain as I was. I grew confused, your sadness out of place in the quiet black night. I slipped back to my rest, and you were taken far away.

None spoke of the spreading fire. None noticed. I was having a sunny day, and we relaxed by the waves. You were no longer there, but I refused to not see you. I was having a goddamn sunny day.

From Paul & Mandy

Erick,

I found this book in her trunk after the funeral, along with this letter to you. She apparently wanted you to have it, so her mother and I are leaving it for you here. We are going to the cape this week to get away from this ugliness and recuperate a bit.

You can call us at [redacted] if you need to talk. We know she really loved you, no matter what she said these last few weeks.

Best wishes,

Paul + Mandy.

The Housewife

ends lie

cheats death

as infinite as

transinfinite squalor

sighs to herself as

she folds the laundry

fresh summer scent

remembers fantasy

love ringed and unsaid

dreams are passion

dreams are dead

Equations

$amusement \neq enchantment$

$proximity(person)^{emotion} = probability(pain)$

$life \geq death$

$ketchup\ packets \neq tennis\ rackets$

$person^{universe} = null$

$ugly = beautiful$

$experience \geq lifespan = confusion$

beauty ≠ truth

truth = 8

A Simple Request

Please stop calling to me in my sleep, as restless nights do not a morning beauty make. I need a lack of separation but this is not the way. Either own me or drop me into your forgotten dusty closet, but do not linger on possibility.

Apathy

weakness killed my father.

Chad C. theMagnificent

1. Asshole (terminal)
2. Author (in the loosest, loosest sense...)
3. Clearly a made up name, as by a child, or a functionally challenged magician.

Related Glossary Terms

Index